

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 AID-05 OMB-01

TRSE-00 SCA-01 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 NEAE-00 /095 W  
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P R 011746Z SEP 76

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2187

INFO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GENEVA 6971

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: THE ICRC ROLE IN CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON

REF: STATE 213889

1. MESSAGE PARA 1, REF, CONVEYED TO ICRC DELEGATE GENERAL  
FOR MIDDLE EAST MICHEL CONVERS AND ASSISTANT ISSLER YESTERDAY.

2. IN RESPONSE TO CRITICISM REPORTED PARA 2, CONVERS FIRST  
OBSERVED THAT FACT ICRC IS DRAWING SUCH CRITICISM FROM BOTH  
SIDES (GENEVA 6751) WOULD INDICATE THEY ARE DOING A PRETTY  
GOOD JOB OF IMPARTIAL DISTRIBUTION AND TREATMENT IN LEBANON.  
IDEALLY AND MOST SIMPLY, HE SAID, ICRC WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ALL  
ASSISTANCE PROVIDED IN SITUATIONS SUCH AS LEBANON AND SPLIT IT  
DOWN THE MIDDLE, WITH HALF GOING TO EITHER SIDE. HOWEVER,  
THIS WOULD NOT CORRESPOND TO ICRC'S BASIC AND LONG-STANDING  
CRITERION OF DISTRIBUTING ITS ASSETS STRICTLY ON THE BASIS  
OF NEED.

3. FACT OF MATTER IS, CONVERS EXPLAINED, THAT ACTUAL NEED  
HAS CHANGED DURING HISTORY OF FIGHTING IN LEBANON:  
FROM OCTOBER TO APRIL, THE CHRISTIAN OR CONSERVATIVE  
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SIDE WAS GETTING THE WORST OF IT, THEREFORE HAD THE

GREATER NEED, THEREFORE RECEIVED THE GREATER PART OF ICRC'S ATTENTION AND ASSISTANCE; THERE WAS A MIDDLE PERIOD FROM THEN UNTIL ROUGHLY JUNE, IN WHICH THE TIDES WERE SHIFTING, AND NEEDS AND ASSISTANCE WERE DEVIDED SOMEWHAT EVENLY BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES; FROM ABOUT JUNE ONWARD, THE MOSLEMS OR PROGRESSIVES HAVE SUGGERED THE MORE, HAVE GREATER NEED, AND, THEREFORE ARE RECEIVING MORE ICRC ASSISTANCE. THIS HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY TRUE, HE NOTED, SINCE THE FALL OF TEL AL ZAATAR.

4. THE CHRISTIAN AREA, REFERRED TO COLLECTIVELY AS JOUNIEH BY THE ICRC, EMBRACES THE ENTRIE REGION FROM EASTERN BEIRUT NORTHWARD THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS, THEN WESTWARD TO THE SEA JUST SOULD OF TRIPOLI, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY BETTER OFF AT THIS TIME THEN THE PROGRESSIVE SECTOR OF LEBANON. NONETHELESS, ICRC CALCULATES THERE ARE 320,000 DISPLACED PERSONS (DPS) IN JOUNIEH, OF WHOM 100,000 TO 150,000 CAN BE JUDGED AS "SOCIAL CASES" OR TURLY NEEDY. THE PROGRESSIVE-CONTROLLED AREA, BY CONTRAST, HAS FEWER DPS BUT MORE SOCIAL CASES IN ICRC'S JUDGEMENT (EXACT FIGURES NOT AVAILABLE YET), BUT THIS PICTURE IS CHANGING WITH EVENTS SUCH AS TEL AL ZAATAR, WHICH PRODUCED LARGE DP CONCENTRATION AREA IN REGION OF NABATIYE. ACCORDING TO CONVERS, SOME PARTS OF JOUNIEH ARE WELL OFF AND RELATIVELY UNAFFECTED BY THE FIGHTING, SUCH AS THE BEIRUT DISTRICT OF ASHRAFIEH, WHILE OTHER POCKETS SUCH AS THE AIN EL ROMMANE QUARTER ARE POORER AND IN URGENT NED OF ASSISTANCE.

5. AS REGARDS MEDICAL AID, CONVERS SAID THAT THE CHRISTIANS HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER STANDARDS OF LIVING AND WERE UNHAPPY IF THE BEST WERE NOT AVAILABLE TO THEM. (APROPOS, HE TOLD STORY OF RECENT VISIT TO ICRC HEADQUARTERS HERE BY HEAD OF FRENCH MEDICAL TEAM WHICH HAD JUST COMPLETED INSPECTION TRIP TO LEBANON, WHO STATED THAT WOME OF THE FACILITIES HE HAD SEEN IN CHRISTIAN LEBANON WERE STILL SUPERIOR TO THOSE IN MANY PROVINCIAL CENTERS IN FRACE.) THUS UNDER WAR-TIME CIRCUMSTANCES, WHEN MEDICAL SERVICES MUST BE CURTAILED TO NECESSARY

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MINIMUM, THE CHRISTIANS COMPLAIN, BUT THERE IS NO REAL DEARTH OF ESSENTIAL BASIC MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND PERSONNEL. FOR INSTANCE, CONVERS SAID, WHILE THERE IS ONLY ONE NEUROSURGEON AVAILABLE IN ALL JOUNIEH, DOCTORS GENERALLY ARE IN SUFFICIENT NUMBERS THERE AND ICRC HAS RECEIVED NO REQUEST FOR MORE PERSONNEL FROM THAT AREA. BY CONTRAST, THERE IS A CRYING NEED FOR ADDITIONAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE PROGRESSIVE SECTOR, TO WHICH THE

ARAB LEAGUE IS NOW RESPONDING IN PART BY SENDING IN A TEAM.

6. IN A GENERAL SENSE ALSO, CONVERS EXPLAINED, THE TRADITIONAL 40 PERCENT LEBANESE CHRISTIAN POPULATION HAS BEEN BETTER OFF MATERIALLY THT THEIR MOSLEM FELLOWS. TODAY THE GREATER PART OF THE POPULATION FLEEING LEBANON IS CHRISTIAN ("EVERY LEBANESE YOU SEE IN GENEVA IS CHRISTIAN") ADDING FURTHER TO THE IM-BALANCE IN POPULATION. ALTHOUGH HE WOULD NOT HAZARD A FIGURE, CONVERS STATED THT THE PRESENT POPULATION IN JOUNIEH IS APPRECIABLY LESS THAN THAT IN THE MISLEM AREA, WHICH MEANS THT, OTHER FACTORS APART, THE NEEDS ARE LESS. ON THE PROGRESSIVE SIDE, HOWEVER, NEEDS ARE RISING AND THE ICRC IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN ESTIMATING WHAT IS GOING TO BE REQUIRED CONTRY WIDE. THEY ARE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED AT THIS TIME IN DETERMINING WHAT WILL BE NEEDED IN THE SYRIAN-CONTROLLED BEKAA PLAIN, WHICH IS THUS FAR UNKNOWN. THEY ARE HOPEFUL THAT REQUIREMENTS THERE WILL NOT BE GREAT BECAUSE OF THE MATERIAL RICHNESS OF THE REGION AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY LARGE SCALE FIGHTING THERE DUE TO THE SYRIAN PRESENCE.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2188

INFO AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GENEVA 6971

7. CONVERS ATTRIBUTED AT LEAST SOME OF THE CHRISTIAN UNHAPPINESS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH ICRC SUPPLIES HAD BEEN DELIVERED. IN THE BEGINNING, AND FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THEREAFTER, ICRC SUPPLIES FOR THE PROGRESSIVES WERE SENT BY THE WELL IDENTIFIED RED CROSS PLANE THROUGH BEIRUT, WHILE SIMILAR SUPPLIES WERE BEING DELIVERED BY ANONYMOUS COMMERCIAL SHIPPING TO THE CHRISTIAN SECTOR. THUS THE IMPRESSION WAS SPREAD THAT ICRC WAS ASSISTING THE PROGRESSIVES WHILE DELIVERING NOTHING TO THE CHRISTIANS. THIS, HOWEVER, HAS NOW CHANGED WITH THE CHARTERING OF AN IDENTIFIED ICRC BOAT (GENEVA 6676) WHICH LAST WEEK, SUBSEQUENT TO THE VISIT REPORTED REFTEL, DELIVERED 400 TONS OF SUPPLIES TO JOUNIEH.

8. STILL ON THE SUBJECT OF SUPPLIES, CONVERS AND ISSLER EXPLAINED THAT ICRC MAINTAINED SEPARATE DEPOTS IN EACH SECTOR TO SATISFY REQUIREMENTS ON EITHER SIDE. HOWEVER, THEY NOTED THAT ICRC HAD TO KEEP CLOSE WATCH ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THERE SUPPLIES WERE UTILIZED SINCE THERE CONTINUED TO BE A BRISK COMMERCIAL MARKET IN GOODS OF THE TYPE THEY DISTRIBUTED, DESPITE THE WAR-TIME SITUATION.

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9. CONCERNING PARA 3, REF, CONVERS WAS EMPHATIC: AS LONG AS THE WAR CONTINUES IN LEBANON, THE ICRC WILL STAY ON, ("IT IS OUT DUTY"). ONLY WHEN THERE IS A "SERIOUS CEASE FIRE AND RESETTLEMENT" WILL THE ICRC LEAVE, AS U.N. BODIES AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS TAKE OVER THE TASKS OF RECONSTRUCTION. CONVERS FELT THAT INFORMATION REFERRED TO IN PARA 3 WAS UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSED BY COMPLETE MISUNDERSTANDING BUT WAS, IN ANY EVENT, TOTALLY WRONG. CATTO

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## Message Attributes

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